

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A web coating apparatus having a vacuum chamber which has between a back wall and at least one removable closing plate a shield with a flat cover, at least one guide roll; and a coating cylinder with an axis (A) as well as at least one coating source disposed in the vacuum chamber, wherein the ends of the at least one guide roll and of the coating cylinder which face the closing plate are fastened to the cover with bearings, and wherein the space in the vacuum chamber underneath the coating cylinder is free of supporting elements, and further comprising dividing walls, wherein the dividing walls have at their ends opposite from the back wall radially running sealing bars against which the closing plate can be placed in contact.

Claims 2-10 (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A web coating apparatus according to claim 1 ~~claim 10~~, wherein the sealing bars have elastomeric sealing strips running parallel to their radial center lines, against which the closing plate can be brought in contact upon the closing of the vacuum chamber.

12. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the coating cylinder has an end facing the closing plate in front of which a fixed ring sector is disposed, which partially encompasses the bottom end of the element supporting the coating cylinder.

13. (currently amended) ~~A web coating apparatus according to claim 1~~ A web coating apparatus having a vacuum chamber which has between a back wall and at least one removable closing plate a shield with a flat cover, at least one guide roll; and a coating cylinder with an axis (A) as well as at least one coating source disposed in the vacuum chamber, wherein

the ends of the at least one guide roll and of the coating cylinder which face the closing plate are fastened to the cover with bearings, and wherein the space in the vacuum chamber underneath the coating cylinder is free of supporting elements, wherein the coating cylinder is surrounded at its ends within sub-chambers by strip-like masks curved cylindrically coaxially, which extend around the said ends with tight clearance and shield the coating cylinder against the coating of their surface portions not covered by the web.

14. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the front mask has an elastomeric sealing edge with which the closing plate can be brought into engagement when the vacuum chamber is closed.

15. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the ring sector extends along the circumference to its end edges within the front mask.

16. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the total height of the apparatus from the floor is no more than 2.5 meters.

17. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the vacuum chamber has on each side of the coating cylinder a side chamber in which a winding mandrel, one for an unwinding roll and one for a winding roll as well as corresponding guide rolls for the web.

18. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the side chambers are constituted as vacuum chambers and are joined to the sub-chamber of the vacuum chamber through slits for the passage of the web.

19. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein all sub-chambers of the vacuum chamber and the side chambers are connect each to its own vacuum pump.

20. (previously presented) A web coating apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the upper sides of the side chambers lie at least substantially at the same level as the cover of the vacuum chamber.

21. (currently amended) ~~Web~~ A web coating apparatus according to claim 14, wherein a ring sector extends along the circumference to its end edges within the front mask.